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December 11, 2007

Kwame M. Kilpatrick
Mayor, City of Detroit
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Ave., Ste. 1126
Detroit, MI 48226

Crime in Palmer Woods

Dear Mayor Kilpatrick:

We need help in Palmer Woods. In the last six months our neighborhood has been overwhelmed by home break-ins, car thefts and property losses.

I first moved to Palmer Woods in 1994. In the eighteen months before that move, I looked at virtually every house on the market in this neighborhood because this is where I wanted to live. I grew up in the Detroit area: my father served as the Director of the Walter Reuther Archives at Wayne State University for over fifty years; we attended church in Detroit and it was always my aspiration to live here.

Yesterday, literally as we were preparing this letter, at 1:30 p.m., in broad daylight, a young man walked in front of the house, pulled out a copper downspout attached to the front of the house and fled on foot as I pursued him. Neighbors tried to assist, but this criminal disappeared in the fields across Woodward.

For fourteen years since moving to Palmer Woods we have paid an average of over \$25,000 annually in taxes to the City. During that time, we have never made a phone call to complain about city services or police protection. Until now.

We have been fortunate not to be the victims of crime, personal or property. **THAT HAS CHANGED.** My husband's car, a Saturn, was vandalized, the tires and wheels taken and the undercarriage damaged on Sunday, October 21, 2007. Among other conclusions, it now appears the safest place for a parked car is on the street under a streetlight. And now, as

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have other neighbors, we are victims of copper theft.

The answer is not for residents to chase potential felons around the neighborhood or across Woodward, or to follow cars slowly and stop and ask questions; although these actions have been taken. Some home invasions have occurred. The next result could well be a bigger tragedy.

I am a former prosecutor; my husband served as a Police Commissioner in Illinois. We are not strangers to the problems of responding to crime in a large, economically strapped metropolitan community. We know the Detroit Police Department is short-staffed. Officers cannot be everywhere at all times. But, we are now in the position of not wanting to leave the house to shop for groceries. I hide my keys when I go outside to work in the yard. These are our homes. This is why we work. This is why we pay taxes. Random thefts and vandalism are to be expected in any community. **This is something different.**

What is occurring here is not just teenagers looking for something simple to take. It is professional organizations equipped with cell phones, moving seamlessly and apparently transparently to threaten not just personal safety and property rights but peace of mind. As or more important, it is buyers willing to pay for receipt of stolen property. Daily, daylight criminal activity, with little or no response by an overtaxed police force is something we, among the ten largest metropolitan communities in the United States, should and do find unacceptable.

We live in a small neighborhood occupied by some of Detroit's highest residential taxpayers. There are over 15 unoccupied houses here. Who's next? Will people just give up? Will you help us save this neighborhood?

ENOUGH. You are our mayor. Please help us.

1. Limit access to this small 300-home community by closing road access from Woodward;
2. Install gated entrances on remaining access points;
3. Endorse our community board to place decals on resident vehicles and log license plates of non-resident vehicles; and

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4. Put us personally to work with your staff's expertise in helping stop this CRIME WAVE—and a crime wave is what it is.

Give us a meeting. We would like to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Mason

Evan A. Burkholder